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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Gender Differences in Preferences for Singles Ads that Proclaim Extrinsic Versus Intrinsic Values

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Abstract Two studies (*N*s=1,113 and 98) examined University men and womens' differing preferences for singles ads as a function of the values declared by ad-writers, using Kasser and colleagues' distinction between extrinsic values (financial success, status/fame, and image/attractiveness) and intrinsic values (emotional intimacy, community contribution, and personal growth). In general, participants preferred writers espousing intrinsic values. Women, compared to men, especially preferred partners espousing intrinsic values. They also expressed less interest in partners espousing extrinsic values, with one exception: compared to men, they were *more* interested in partners espousing financial success values. Implications for debates regarding the evolved versus sociological origins of gender differences are discussed, as well as implications for theories of attraction based on the matching hypothesis.

Keywords Mate-value · Singles ads · Intrinsic and extrinsic values · Gender differences

What qualities and characteristics do men and women most desire in a potential mate? This is a very important question, with implications for theories of personality, attachment, communication, relationships, and motivation. Of course it is also an important practical question for those seeking new romantic relationships. How should people present themselves in order to maximize their appeal to those in whom they might have interest?

The "mate value" question has been particularly important within the field of evolutionary psychology, because of its implications for theories of sexual selection and parental investment (Trivers 1972). According to the standard view (Buss and Schmitt 1993), intra-sex competition created divergent selection pressures upon each sex, such that men and women evolved tendencies to desire different characteristics in a mate. Because women bear a larger share of the costs of producing and nurturing children, they are biased to prefer mates who give evidence of resources, status, long-term commitment, and investment in the parenting process. Thus, women seek signs of maturity and stability in a mate, and emphasize looks and youth to a lesser degree. In contrast, men typically pay a much lower share of the cost of producing and raising children, and also have the ability to produce far more children than women. Thus, they are biased to seek multiple partners, of maximal youth, health, and attractiveness, while trying to avoid costly entanglements.

A rather large body of research now supports these two characterizations, although of course, controversies remain, for example, concerning whether these patterns represent the inherited effects of evolutionary processes upon male and female minds, or rather, the developmental effects of perennial societal inequalities (Eagly and Wood 1999; Kasser and Sharma 1999). Still, the patterns themselves are fairly well established (Feingold 1992), having emerged consistently in content-analyses of self-descriptions within published "singles ads" (Bereczkei et al. 1997; Gil-Burmann et al. 2002), in analyses of the self-descriptions within singles ads that elicit the most responses from readers (Baize and Schroeder 1995), and in questionnaire and scenario studies of participants' past, present and future partner preferences (Feingold 1992). They have also been observed in multiple cultures and types of society (Buss 1989), and in longitudinal studies of young adults' personality development (Pines 1998). Furthermore, they have been observed in research conducted from multiple theoretical perspectives,

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including not only the evolutionary perspective described above but also demographic (Koziel and Pawlowski 2003), socio-cultural (Gil-Burmann et al. 2002), social exchange (Willis and Carlson 1993), and personality matching (Klohnen and Mendelsohn 1998) perspectives.

An important aspect of this pattern is that women seem to be more interested in the "personality" of potential mates, whereas men are less interested in personality factors (Ellis 1992; Feingold 1992). However, to date, studies of this pattern have focused only on personality traits and dispositions. This is a limitation because personality consists of at least three distinct levels or "tiers" (McAdams 1995, 1996, 2001; Sheldon 2004): namely, traits/dispositions, goals/motives, and self-concepts/life-narratives. McAdams (1996) argued that each of these types of construct supplies independent information about personality, information that cannot be reduced to the other two levels. Thus, in order to have a reasonably complete sense of another person, we need to know not just about their habitual behavioral traits and tendencies, but also, about their chronic values and purposes in life, and also, about their evolving identity and the life-story in which that identity is embedded.

It is logical for personality traits to be a particular object of focus for those seeking new romantic partners, because traits address "the psychology of the stranger" (McAdams 2001). That is, traits are the prominent and perhaps universal categories that we use when making inferences about a person whom we are just meeting, reading about, or hearing about (Buss 1997; McCrae and Costa 1990). However, it is also logical that mate-seekers should attend to the other two levels of personality as well. A person's values, goals, and motives, and also his or her sense of self and identity, can provide important clues regarding his or her likely future behavior and accomplishments—clues that prospective mates would be wise to consider. However, to date, evolutionary perspectives upon mating have focused primarily upon traits.

Thus, in this article I focused on the "mate-value" question in a somewhat different way than has past research, by focusing on the proclaimed values (rather than traits) of the potential romantic partner. What does the prospective partner declare to be most important goals and values that he/she pursues, and, how do such declarations affect the declarer's appeal to the other gender? Also, how does the appeal of different values depend on the gender of the person doing the evaluating?

As a foundation for the inquiry I employed Kasser and colleagues' "organismic values model" (Kasser and Ryan 1993, 1996, 2001; Sheldon and Kasser 1998, 2001). This model distinguishes between two types of values: "intrinsic" values (such as emotional intimacy, community contribution, and personal growth), and "extrinsic" values (such as financial success, status/fame, and image/attractiveness). Pursuing intrinsic values is theorized and shown to be more directly satisfying of psychological needs and more conducive to psychological well-being, whereas pursuing extrinsic values is less satisfying and tends to breed ego-involvement, frustration, and feelings of pressure and tension (Kasser 2002). Extrinsic values have been shown to develop when environments are unsafe or insecure, or when parents are too cold and controlling (Kasser et al. 1995; Kasser et al. 2002). Much factor analytic work supports the basic distinction between the two types of values, and research has also supported the claim that intrinsic values are relatively more satisfying and perhaps more psychologically healthy than extrinsic values (see Kasser 2002, for a summary).

I suggest that the organismic values model provides a particularly apt way to explore the question of what values people wish to see in a potential mate. First, the model provides a validated multi-dimensional framework within which to locate different people, and different types of people (Grouzet et al. 2005). Thus, it affords a reasonably comprehensive means of comparing the differing mate-value preferences of men and women. Second, the model provides constructs that are thematically relevant to the earlier studies of mate-values discussed above. In particular, the extrinsic values of financial success and image/attractiveness map well onto the characteristics of financial resources and physical attractiveness that have been shown to distinguish male and female preferences in the past. In addition, the intrinsic values of emotional intimacy, community contribution, and personal growth map well onto the type of mature and cooperative personality characteristics that women generally prefer (Feingold 1992).

Because of these convergences, the current research allows us address whether male and female mate-seekers want their prospective partners to value the same characteristics that they want their partners to actually possess. This would not necessarily be expected—for example, although a man might want his wife to be attractive, he might not want her to attach strong importance to physical attractiveness as a life-value. Conversely, values may sometimes carry important information that current traits do not—for example, a young man with few current assets may seem more attractive if he values financial success in the future. Once again, considering the distinction between traits and values may enable new purchase for evolutionary perspectives upon mating.

I also reasoned that applying Kasser and Ryan's organismic values model in this way might lead to new theoretical development for the values model itself. Again, "financial success," "status/fame," and "image/attractiveness" typically load on the same factor and have often been treated as interchangeable exemplars of the extrinsic value-type, because all have been shown to have (modest) negative associations with psychological well-being (Kasser 2002). However, it is possible that these values break apart when considered from a mate-values perspective. For example, although women may in general prefer intrinsic values in a mate, and may also de-emphasize physical appearance and recognition/popularity values in a mate, they may make an exception in the case of financial success values, because of their importance in predicting later resource acquisition. If so, then it may be that "not all extrinsic values are created equal" when it comes to female mate choices.

Indeed, such a finding would conceptually replicate the trait-based results of Simpson and Gangestad (1992) and Fletcher et al. (1999). These researchers found that three factors emerged in studies of multiple ideal mate characteristics: a vitality/physical attractiveness factor, a resources/status factor (both which might be considered "extrinsic" from the current perspective), and a third factor that they called "warmth/trustworthiness" but which might be called "intrinsic" from the current perspective. Simpson and colleagues' discovery of two distinct extrinsic profiles supports my speculation that, at least within the context of mate-selection, there may be important differences between different types of extrinsic values. Further supporting this conjecture, Willis and Carlson's (1993) analysis of published singles ads showed that men typically offer resources and seek appearance, whereas women typically offer appearance and seek resources.

In the first study below I hoped to both replicate and extend past findings concerning the characteristics that males and females are attracted to within singles advertisements, by considering the values rather than the traits displayed in those advertisements. It was expected that this approach would help to develop the organismic values model by showing that "not all extrinsic values are equal," when it comes to mate selection. The proposal that the extrinsic values of money and appearance would break apart in this context is also consistent with evolutionary theorizing stating that men are particularly attuned to the physical appearance of potential mates, whereas women are particularly attuned to the financial prospects of potential mates.

Study 1

Study 1 presented male and female participants with six hypothetical singles advertisements, and asked them to rate how interested they might be in dating each of the six people portrayed by the advertisements. The advertisements differed only in which one of the six extrinsic or extrinsic values discussed above were mentioned at the end. This repeated-measures experimental design, along with the between-subjects factor of gender, allowed me to test three primary hypotheses:

1) In general, participants would prefer intrinsic values in a mate. This would be revealed in a within-subject main effect of value-type, and would replicate and extend past findings that people generally give greater endorsement to intrinsic values for themselves (Kasser 2002).
2) Women would evidence an even greater preference for intrinsic values in a mate. This would be revealed in a significant two-way interaction between gender of participant (male vs. female) and value-type (intrinsic vs. extrinsic), and would support past findings that women are more sensitive to signs of mature personality in romantic partners (Feingold 1992).
3) Gender would interact with the specific type of extrinsic value under consideration. In particular, women (compared to men) might find greater appeal in financial success values in a prospective mate, while also finding less appeal (compared to men) in status/recognition or image/attractiveness values in a mate. Such a three-way interaction would be difficult to explain in terms of the organismic values model by itself, which tends to treat the extrinsic values interchangeably. However, it might be relatively easy to explain from an evolutionary perspective, which focuses on the relative costs and benefits of different extrinsic utilities.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Initial participants were 1,113 introductory psychology students at the University of Missouri, who participated in a web-based "pre-test" survey taken by nearly the entire subject pool. After indicating their gender, participants were asked to "Please indicate your own sexual orientation," using a 1 (exclusively heterosexual) to 2 (mostly heterosexual) to 3 (bisexual) to 4 (mostly homosexual) to 5 (exclusively homosexual) scale. Thirty-two participants were dropped because they responded with a 3, 4, or 5, leaving a sample of exclusively or mostly heterosexual participants (although the effects of same-gender attraction are of considerable interest, in this sample there were not enough declared homosexual participants to examine the issue). Also, 31 participants were dropped who did not answer the sexual orientation question. In addition, 29 participants were dropped because they did not answer all of the singles ad questions. Thus, the final sample consisted of 1,017 heterosexual participants, 548 men and 469 women; 88% were Caucasian, 8% were African-American, 3% were Asian, 1% was Hispanic, and 2% were “other;” the median age was 19.

Preferred partner values Later, participants read “Please rate what your degree of interest would be in dating each of the individuals who are presenting themselves in the personal advertisements below (imagine you are single, if you are currently in a relationship).” The scale provided ranged from 1 (not at all interested) to 3 (moderately interested) to 5 (very interested). Each of the six advertisements began as follows: “20-something seeking a special someone. I’m of average height and weight, and value good times, good food, and...” The three extrinsic value ads ended with “financial success,” “recognition/fame,” or “physical attractiveness,” and the three intrinsic value ads ended with “emotional intimacy,” “personal growth,” or “helping others.” Ads were presented in the following order: financial success, emotional intimacy, physical attractiveness, personal growth, recognition/fame, and helping others.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

I first conducted a principal components analysis of the six advertisement ratings. Two factors emerged, accounting for 75.29% of the variance. After varimax rotation, the first factor was loaded upon by the three intrinsic values of intimacy, growth, and helping (all loadings .79 or more; no cross-loadings greater than .29), whereas the second factor was loaded upon by the three extrinsic values of financial success, attractiveness, and recognition (all loadings .63 or more). Notably, however, the financial success item also cross-loaded .57 upon the intrinsic value factor, a coefficient that was almost as great as its loading of .63 upon the extrinsic factor. This belies the typical pattern with these six constructs (Kasser 2002; Sheldon et al. 2003), and supports the proposal that financial success values may have a somewhat different meaning in the domain of preferred partner values, as compared to the typically studied domain of preferred personal values.

Hypothesis Tests

The six advertisement means are presented in Table 1, split by gender. To test my primary hypotheses I submitted the six ratings to a MANOVA, specifying value-type (intrinsic versus extrinsic) as a within-subject factor and gender (male or female) as a between-subjects factor.

Supporting my first hypothesis, there was a significant main effect of value type (F (3,1013)=312.6, p<.01). Overall, participants preferred the ads endorsing intrinsic values over the ads endorsing extrinsic values (intrinsic ad M=3.15 vs. extrinsic ad M=2.57, t (1,016)=21.29, p<.01). This is consistent with past findings regarding mean levels of endorsement of intrinsic vs. extrinsic personal values (Kasser 2002), showing that the pattern also applies when people rate the values held by others.

Table 1 Study 1: Means and standard deviations for preferred values proclaimed in singles ads, split by value-type and by gender.

	Gender			
	Men		Women	
	M	SD	M	SD
Extrinsic values				
Financial success	2.87	1.16	3.07	1.19[a]
Recognition/Fame	2.06	1.07	1.93	1.03[a]
Physical attractiveness	2.97	1.23	2.48	1.21[a]
Intrinsic values				
Personal growth	2.97	1.15	3.00	1.07
Helping others	3.19	1.18	3.42	1.10[a]
Emotional intimacy	3.21	1.15	3.11	1.17

Scale ranged from 1–5.

[a] the row means differ at the .05 level or less.

More importantly, however, and supporting my second hypothesis, there was also a significant gender by value-type interaction (F (3,1013)=17.37, p<.01). Overall, women preferred ads emphasizing intrinsic values more than ads emphasizing extrinsic values (intrinsic and extrinsic Ms=3.18 vs. 2.49, t (547)=17.17, p<.01), a difference that was not as large for men (Ms=3.12 vs. 2.64, t (468)=13.29, p<.01). Matched-group t-tests of the six individual values (see Table 1) found significant gender differences for the helping value (t(1,015)=3.22, p<.01; women were higher), and also found significant gender differences for all three of the extrinsic values (ts(1,015)=2.04, 2.65, and 6.41, for recognition, financial success, and attractiveness, respectively). Interestingly, however, the male–female difference for the financial success value (in which women were higher) went in the opposite direction of the differences for the other two extrinsic values (in which women were lower).

This led to the test of my third hypothesis, namely, that the pattern of gender differences varies across the different extrinsic value sub-types. Specifically, I conducted a 2 (Gender: Male vs. female) by 3 (Extrinsic value sub-type: Financial success vs. recognition vs. attractiveness) MANOVA on the three extrinsic ratings, with repeated measures on the second factor. This yielded the hypothesized interaction between gender and extrinsic value sub-type (F (2,1014)=62.60, p<.01). Again, this suggests that “not all extrinsic values are created equal" when it comes to understanding female mate choice.

Brief Discussion

Study 1 provided good support for my hypotheses. In general, all participants preferred advertisements in which the writer proclaimed the intrinsic values of emotional intimacy, helping others, and personal growth. This is consistent with past findings that people more strongly endorse intrinsic values for themselves (Kasser 2002). The pattern was qualified by a significant two-way interaction, however—overall, women gave even greater emphasis to intrinsic compared to extrinsic values in a mate. This is conceptually consistent with past findings that women prefer more mature and cooperative personality characteristics (Feingold 1992), and also with some past organismic values research (Kasser 2002).

However, the pattern was qualified yet further by a significant interaction involving the three extrinsic values only: Although women preferred less recognition/fame and physical attractiveness values in a mate, they preferred more financial success values in a mate. This finding is consistent with other recent findings (Simpson and Gangestad 1992; Fletcher et al. 1999) and suggests that the three "extrinsic" values identified by Kasser and colleagues, which typically load on the same factor, may split apart when it comes to mate values. Although women may generally shy away from "immature" (appearance and fame-centered) men, the possibility that a man may accrue significant financial resources seems to have significant positive appeal.

Study 2

An important limitation of Study 1 is that it did not consider participants' *own* personal values. Thus, we cannot be sure that the gender differences in mate value preferences do not simply reflect gender differences in personal or general value preferences. In fact, matching perspectives upon mating suggest that this might be the case, as people orient towards others who hold values similar to themselves (Klohnen and Mendelsohn 1998). If the Study 1 gender effects are found to disappear when the personal values of men and women are considered, then this would suggest that the results are due to a simple matching effect, rather than having evolutionary implications as suggested. To rule out this possibility, Study 2 assessed the six values (three extrinsic and three intrinsic) both in terms of what is important for oneself, and in terms of what is important in a potential romantic partner.

My initial three hypotheses were the same as in Study 1—namely, that participants would prefer intrinsic more than extrinsic values in a potential romantic partner (a main effect of value-type) and that women would especially evidence this pattern (a value-type x gender interaction), but that this gender pattern would not apply for the financial success value (a gender x value-type x value sub-type interaction).

In addition, I ventured two new hypotheses. First, participants' own personal values should affect their feelings about the values proclaimed by the potential partners. In other words, consistent with past findings that people tend to prefer partners who are like themselves (Buss and Schmitt 1993; Klohnen and Mendelsohn 1998), those who especially endorse intrinsic values should be especially approving of intrinsic values in a potential partner, and vice versa for those who endorse extrinsic values themselves. This matching effect would be revealed by significant correlations between personal values and desired mate values. Second, despite this effect, I also expected the predicted gender differences to remain even after controlling for personal value endorsements. That is, the male/female differences should involve more than mere gender differences involving participants' own personal values, because there are different and perhaps evolved processes at work when the topic turns to romantic partner preferences.

To more concretely illustrate the distinction, consider that the evolutionary perspective suggests that men and women seek partners with different but complementary attributes—thus, although men may not especially value personal appearance for themselves, they may especially value appearance in the partner, and although women may not especially value personal wealth for themselves, they may value wealth in the partner. In contrast, the matching perspective expects people to prefer those with the same values as themselves, such that those who value financial success also want their partner to value financial success, and so on—regardless of partner gender. In fact, there is no reason why both proposals cannot be true at the same time, at within- and between-gender levels of analysis. Thus, although women on average might prefer financial success values in a prospective mate more than men, still, women less oriented towards financial success than other women might be less attracted to men advertising financial success values. Thus, I expected that the data would show that both the matching and the evolutionary perspectives have merit.

Method

Participants and Procedure

The participants were 98 introductory psychology students at the University of Missouri, 45 men and 53 women, who were fulfilling a course requirement. Eighty-four percent were Caucasian, 5% were African-American, 3% were Asian, and 7% were Hispanic or "other;" the median age was 19. After signing up for the study they were emailed a link to an on-line survey that contained the measures.

Measure

Personal values Participants read "Below are six values. Please rate the importance of each value to you." In order, the values were "being physically attractive," "helping those who need it," "being admired by others," "having many people I feel very close to," "having many nice things," and "continuing to grow as a person." This is a short form of the Aspirations Index (Kasser and Ryan 1996, 2001) that has been employed in several recent studies (Sheldon et al. 2003; Sheldon et al. 2003). A 1 (not at all) to 3 (somewhat) to 5 (very much) scale was provided.

Preferred partner values Preferred partner values were assessed later in the questionnaire using the same items employed in Study 1, namely, the six hypothetical personal advertisements that varied in which of the six values was mentioned at the end.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

I first performed a principal components analysis of the six personal value items. Two components emerged, accounting for 67.9% of the variance. After rotation, one component was defined by the three intrinsic items and the other component by the three extrinsic items (all loadings .64 or greater; all cross-loadings .42 or less). Thus, the three extrinsic values cohere with respect to the personal values measure, even though may not with respect to partner values. To again evaluate the latter issue, I analyzed the six partner value items. Two components emerged, accounting for 61.5% of the variance. After rotation, one component was defined by the three intrinsic ads and the other component by the three extrinsic ads (all loadings .58 or greater). However, as in Study 1, the advertisement proclaiming the "financial success" value also cross-loaded on the intrinsic factor (cross-loading=.49), again suggesting that financial success values take on more mixed meaning in the context of partner preferences.

As another preliminary analysis, I tested for gender differences on the six personal values (in which participants rated their own endorsement of the values without regard to preferences in romantic partners). This analysis revealed significant gender differences for all three intrinsic values (see Table 2; women more strongly endorsed personal growth, emotional intimacy, and helping others; *t*s(96)=2.54, 2.98, and 2.81, respectively, all *p*s≤.01). In addition, women more strongly endorsed physical appearance values (*t* (96)= 2.50, *p*=.01). The intrinsic value results in particular suggest that gender differences in personal values could potentially account for gender differences in preferred partner values. Thus, in order to demonstrate the claimed specificity of the gender x value effects, it becomes important to see if they remain significant when personal values are controlled (as will be done in a later section).

Hypothesis Tests

Replications The six advertisement means are presented in Table 3, split by gender. To test my basic hypotheses I submitted the six ratings to a MANOVA, specifying value-type (intrinsic versus extrinsic) as a within-subject factor and gender (male or female) as a between-subjects factor. Based on the Study 1 finding that the gender by value-type interaction varied across the three extrinsic values, I also included a second within-subject factor in the design, namely, value sub-type (with three levels). I hypothesized that a three-way interaction would emerge between gender, value type, and value sub-type, reflecting the fact that women vary significantly across their endorsements of the three extrinsic values in a potential partner.

Again supporting the first hypothesis and consistent with past personal values research (Kasser 2002), there was a significant main effect of value type (*F* (1,95)=107.27, *p*<.01). Overall, participants preferred the ads listing intrinsic values to the ads listing extrinsic values (intrinsic ad *M*=3.60 vs. extrinsic ad *M*=2.65, *t* (97)=10.44, *p*<.01). More importantly, however, and again supporting my second hypothesis, there

Table 2 Study 2: Means and standard deviations for preferred personal values, split by value-type and by gender.

	Gender			
	Men		Women	
	M	SD	M	SD
Extrinsic values				
Financial success	3.18	.94	3.48	1.18
Recognition/Fame	3.67	.85	3.90	1.01
Physical attractiveness	3.69	.82	4.13	.92[a]
Intrinsic values				
Personal growth	4.47	.69	4.77	.47[a]
Helping others	4.02	.75	4.42	.63[a]
Emotional intimacy	3.91	1.02	4.47	.85[a]

Scale ranged from 1–5.

[a] the row means differ at the .01 level or less.

Table 3 Study 2: Means and standard deviations for preferred values proclaimed in singles ads, split by value-type and by gender.

	Gender			
	Men		Women	
	M	SD	M	SD
Extrinsic values				
Financial success	2.93	.79	3.23	1.10
Recognition/Fame	2.27	1.02	2.00	.92
Physical attractiveness	3.09	.94	2.43	1.08[a]
Intrinsic values				
Personal growth	3.41	.84	3.51	1.15
Helping others	3.66	.71	3.87	.88
Emotional intimacy	3.50	.90	3.62	1.11

Scale ranged from 1–5.

was a significant gender by value-type interaction (*F* (1,95)= 3.88, *p*=.05). Overall, women preferred ads emphasizing intrinsic values more than ads emphasizing extrinsic values (*M*s=3.67 vs. 2.55, *t* (52)=9.60, *p*<.01), a difference that was more pronounced than that for men (*M*s=3.52 vs. 2.77, *t* (44)=5.43, *p*<.01). *T*-tests evaluating gender differences in each value separately yielded significant differences only for the physical attractiveness value (*t*(96)=2.50, *p*=.01; see Table 3 for the means). However, the effect sizes for financial success, recognition/fame, and helping (the other three differences that were significant in Study 1) were of equal or greater magnitude in Study 2 compared to Study 1, and thus it appears that the Study 2 pattern of gender differences generally replicates the Study 1 pattern, despite the lower *N* and power of Study 2.

Next, I evaluated the predicted three-way interaction between gender, value-type, and value sub-type, i.e., my third basic hypothesis. This interaction was indeed significant (*F* (2,94)=5.35, *p*<.01). To follow up on this interaction I focused only on the three extrinsic values, and found the same gender x subtype interaction as in Study 1 (*F* (2,190)= 9.96, *p*<.01). As can be seen in Table 3, although women tended to express less preference for recognition/fame and physical attractiveness values in a romantic partner, they expressed more preference for financial success values in a partner (although only the difference for physical attractiveness was significant, taken alone). Again, this suggests that "not all extrinsic values are created equal" when it comes to understanding female mate choice. In contrast, no gender x value subtype interaction emerged in an analysis of the three intrinsic values (*p*>.50); women gave modestly greater endorsement to all three of the intrinsic values.

New hypotheses Next, I tested the two new hypotheses of Study 2. One was the "matching" idea that those with more intrinsic personal values give even greater preference to singles ads proclaiming intrinsic values, and vice versa for extrinsic values. To test this, for each participant I computed an intrinsic personal preference score by adding the three intrinsic values and computed an extrinsic personal preference score by adding the three extrinsic values (alphas=.65 and .67, respectively, for these 3-item measures). I followed the same procedure with the mate preference ratings (alphas=.66 and .80, respectively). I then correlated the intrinsic and extrinsic personal value measures with corresponding intrinsic and extrinsic mate value measures. The two intrinsic measures correlated .30 and the two extrinsic measures correlated .27 (both *p*s<.01); the two cross-correlations were non-significant. Also, the size of the matching correlations did not differ significantly for men versus women.

Next, I tested whether the primary gender effects still emerge when personal value ratings are controlled. If including personal values eliminates the gender differences, or if personal values interact with gender in some way, this would suggest that the Study 1 results are reducible to personal values, or at least contingent upon them. On the other hand, if the Study 1 patterns remain intact, this would suggest that both evolutionary and matching hypotheses have merit.

To do this I re-conducted the 2 (gender)×2 (mate value-type)×3 (mate value sub-type) MANOVA upon the six mate-value scores that was described above, this time specifying an ANCOVA in which participants' six personal value scores were partialled out. This controls for any main or interactive effects of personal values, establishing the independence of the earlier effects from personal value effects. In this analysis the critical gender x value-type interaction remained significant (*F* (2,185)= 3.48, *p*<.05), as did the equally critical gender x value-type x value sub-type interaction (*F* (2,185)=6.29, *p*<.01). Thus, women once again preferred more intrinsic and less extrinsic partners, excepting those espousing financial success extrinsic values. In addition, the set of personal values was itself significant, consistent with the correlational results reported above and supporting the matching hypothesis.

Brief Discussion

Study 2 replicated the primary Study 1 results. Participants generally preferred intrinsic rather than extrinsic values in a prospective romantic partner, and women even more so. However, women again attached greater importance (relative to men) to financial success values in a potential partner, belying this general pattern. This three-way interaction again suggests that the three "extrinsic" values identified by Kasser and colleagues may split apart when it comes to mate values.

Study 2 also demonstrated that participants' personal values predict the values they prefer in a potential mate (i.e., people tend to prefer those with matching values) and that the gender differences in intrinsic versus extrinsic mate-value preferences are independent of personal values (i.e., they do not disappear when gender differences in personal value endorsements are controlled). Thus, both matching and evolutionary perspectives may be correct.

General Discussion

These two studies revisited the perennial question of which qualities and characteristics people prefer in a potential romantic partner, taking a new approach to the question by studying the potential partner's declared personal values and not just his or her physical/demographic characteristics and/or personality traits. In other words, the concept of mate-value was approached by inviting participants to consider the prospective mate's professed values. A multidimensional model of values (Kasser 2002; Kasser and Ryan 2001) was employed in conjunction with a "singles ad" methodology to descriptively characterize the value-preferences of both men and women. The results have implications not only for evolutionary, sociological, and matching-based theories of romantic attraction, but also, for the two-factor organismic values model upon which the study was based (Kasser 2002; Kasser and Ryan 1996; Sheldon and Kasser 2001).

To briefly summarize the findings: in both studies the six partner value ratings loaded on two factors, similarly to past research concerning personal values. However, in both studies the financial success partner value item cross-loaded on both the intrinsic and extrinsic factors, diverging from typical personal value findings and suggesting that people perceive financial success values somewhat differently with respect to a prospective mate, as compared to themselves. Supporting my first hypothesis, in both studies participants tended to prefer potential partners espousing intrinsic values (intimacy, community, growth) more than extrinsic values (money, fame, and physical attractiveness). This effect replicates and extends past findings concerning peoples' generally greater preference for intrinsic personal values (Kasser 2002).

Supporting my second hypothesis, significant gender by value-type interactions showed that women (compared to men) had an even greater preference for intrinsic (compared to extrinsic) values in a mate, consistent with the fact that women often espouse more intrinsic values themselves (as shown in Study 2). However, the replicated three-way interaction (hypothesis 3) revealed a striking exception to the pattern: the male/female difference in valuing extrinsic values went different ways for ads espousing financial success values, compared to ads espousing the other two extrinsic values (physical attractiveness and fame/popularity). This cross-over effect suggests that "not all extrinsic values are created equal" when it comes to mate-value preferences, and further suggests that the three extrinsic values should not be uncritically lumped together in future organismic values research.

Implications for Evolutionary Theories

The three-way interaction also has important implications for evolutionary analyses of mating preferences. First, it is consistent with prior research and theory showing that women prefer partners with monetary and financial resources, while also preferring partners with personal maturity and a cooperative orientation (Ellis 1992; Feingold 1992). The current studies extend these findings, showing that the general pattern holds for preferred partner *values* as well as for preferred partner *characteristics*. This seems logical, as prospective partners' value statements can doubtless provide important clues regarding both their current character and also their future life-potentials. Interestingly, prior research by Kasser and colleagues suggests that this particular combination of values in a man (i.e. high intrinsic values plus high financial success values) is somewhat unlikely to occur (Kasser 2002), because extrinsic value endorsements typically correlate negatively with intrinsic value endorsements, and because men tend to have less intrinsic values in general. Still, men who possess (or at least advertise) the above combination of values may (on paper at least) be most attractive of all to women.

What about the other two extrinsic values? It is easy to explain the finding that men want prospective mates to attach greater value to physical attractiveness, since this pattern is consistent with much past research showing that "good looks" are the most important determiner of female mate-value (Buss 1989; Feingold 1992). In the current studies, male ad-readers may simply have assumed that a woman who values good looks is probably good-looking already and likely to stay that way.

However, the pattern for the third extrinsic value, fame/popularity, is more difficult to explain. Again, in these data, women evidenced significantly *less* preference than men for potential partners who valued fame and social recognition. This finding seemingly contradicts some past writings, both evolutionary and sociological, arguing that women should be *more* interested in status-seeking men. I will consider the implications for evolutionary theories first.

Simpson and Gangestad (1992), Ellis (1992), and Fletcher et al. (1999) argued that status and material resources are important cues to male mate-value. Notably, however, Ellis (1992) explained the appeal of male status primarily in terms of economic advantages, not in terms of the advantages of fame, popularity, or social influence.

When the latter factors were mentioned, they were discussed primarily as routes to economic advantage. Other writers have also tended to refer to status and resources interchangeably (Feingold 1992), doubtless in part because the phrase "socio-economic status" contains the word status and refers to both income and social class. Empirically, past work on relationship ideals has shown that status and financial items tend to load on the same factor (Simpson and Gangestad 1992; Fletcher et al. 1999). However, the items defining this factor typically refer more to material resources, rather than to popularity, fame, or social influence (i.e., in Table 1 of Fletcher et al. 1999, the highest-loading items on the resources/status factor were "good job," "financially secure," and "nice house or apartment"). Thus, it appears that social status (defined in terms of being well-known, popular, and influential) has not been clearly separated from financial status (defined in terms of having a high income and nice things) in past research. In contrast, the current two studies clearly separated these two concepts.

Here, I suggest that status-seeking is only *indirectly* desirable to women, insofar as status-seeking correlates with (and thus helps signal) resources or the ability to procure resources. Given a choice, the current data show that women much prefer money-seekers over status-seekers, perhaps because of what excessive status-seeking says about the potential partner's immaturity, self-centeredness, and competitiveness (Kasser 2002). For example, Geary (1998) stated that "Socially dominant men are often arrogant and self-serving" (p. 128). In contrast, because of the overriding importance of material resources, women may be willing to take a chance on a mate with this one extrinsic value, as long as he also professes generally intrinsic values.

Notably, this explanation assumes an "intrinsically-oriented" female nature that is forced to make some trade-offs in order to get resources. However, another explanation for why women are less interested in status-seeking mates may be that popular men invite attention and competition from other women. From this perspective, the ideal male partner may be one who is mature, committed, and cooperative, and also provides plenty of material resources, yet does not attract the attention of competitors in the mate-market. Whichever explanation is correct, the current data indicate that status-seeking and resource-seeking should be measured separately in future research. The current data also offer new support for evolutionary theories asserting that material resources are one of the most important determinants of male mate-value (Buss 1989, 2000).

Implications for Sociological Theories

These data may also have important implications for sociological explanations of gender differences, and the debate over the relative merit of sociological versus evolutionary explanations. Eagly and colleagues (Eagly and Wood 1999; Eagly et al. 2004) have argued that women's greater preference for financially resourceful mates (found in many different cultures; Buss 1989, 2000) results from universal social-structural and gender role differences that are ultimately based on male–female body-size differences (i.e. strength and size), rather than evolved differences in female versus male minds. Because of the societal imbalances engendered by physical dimorphism in nearly every culture, women are at a chronic disadvantage relative to men both in their financial resources and in their social status (i.e., fewer women become corporate leaders and more women engage in lower-status, lower-paid domestic or teaching jobs).

Importantly, if female mate preferences are driven by learned desires to compensate for status and material inequalities, as Eagly and colleagues suggest, then women should prefer signs of future financial success and signs of status-seeking in potential mates, because women typically have less of both within societies. However, that was not the case in the present data; instead, women were significantly less interested in a status-seeking mate. Stated differently, Eagly et al.'s sociological perspective and Buss and colleagues' evolutionary perspective appear to make divergent predictions regarding the direction of gender differences in the rated importance of status-seeking in a prospective mate. Furthermore, the current results appear to better support this evolutionary perspective. Of course, it will take much more research to develop this idea.

Implications for Matching Theories

It is also worth considering the implications of these results for "matching" theories of mate attraction, which specify that people seek partners who are similar to themselves (Klohnen and Mendelsohn 1998), presumably because such matching is associated with a wide variety of positive marital outcomes (Wilson and Cousins 2003). This proposition was supported in Study 2, in that participants' own values correlated with the values desired in a mate. Importantly, however, the evolutionarily-relevant patterns described above remained significant after these matching effects were controlled, indicating that the data support both positions. Also, the fact that women (in the aggregate) significantly preferred a characteristic for themselves that they significantly rejected in a potential mate (i.e., physical appearance values; see Table 2) further suggests that assortation via simple matching is not the whole story; instead, each gender may also be seeking characteristics that differ from (and perhaps complement) that gender's typical personal values. To summarize, it appears that women prefer potential partners who a) in general espouse intrinsic values and values similar to themselves, but who also b) espouse values likely to provide them with commodities suggested to be important by evolutionary analyses (e.g., financial success values). Again, it may be that both processes taking place at once.

There are several important limitations of these studies. First, the different mate-values were assessed with only one item per scale. Future research should expand the assessment of the mate-values, thereby boosting reliability and presumably strengthening the patterns. Future research should also extend the study to multiple cultures around the world, to assess the cross-cultural invariance of the patterns. Do the results differ for cultures that vary in level of gender equality and reproductive freedom (Eagly and Wood 1999; Kasser and Sharma 1999)? Finally, future research might attempt to content-code published advertisements in terms of the value constructs studied herein, as a means of understanding which ads attracted the most response from readers. Although much remains to be done, hopefully the current studies have demonstrated the potential value of considering how people differently value differing values within prospective mates. Ideally these studies have also illuminated the broader advantages of considering both organismic and evolutionary perspectives upon the valuing process.

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